

Meditation

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

What is Meditation?

Focusing with a receptive awareness or simply experiencing without judgment.

What are the benefits of meditation?

Research shows that meditating for 20 minutes a day can reduce harmful effects of chronic stress on our mind and body. Meditation can lead to beneficial changes in our brain such as increased attention and memory, emotional regulation, empathy and compassion.

What is meditation practice?

Aim to practice for 20 minutes a day. You can try for two 10 minutes sessions or sustain practice for 20 minutes. However, practicing mini relaxation exercises during the day can also counteract the negative impact of stress. Meditation can be guided by another person or APP or self directed. When your mind wanders from your intended focus simply return to the breath without any judgment. Anything that happens IS OK!

Learning Diaphragmatic Breathing

Lie on the floor or sit with your buttocks toward the edge of the chair to assume a slanting forward position. Place one hand just below the navel and the other hand at the center of your chest. Relax your shoulders down and take a deep inhalation through your nostrils. Focus on the rise of your abdomen while your lungs fill up with air and your diaphragm moves down. The movement should be in your lower hand. The chest should only rise slightly. Exhale through

rounded lips as if blowing out a candle or let go with the sound of “ahhh”. Once you learn diaphragmatic breathing, you may lie on the floor, sit back in a chair or sit on the floor with cushions and a wall for support.

How to sustain focus?

Think of a pleasing word or pair of words, phrase, chant, sound, image or combination of these to align focus on the breath. Inhale for **4** seconds, pause for **7**, breath out for **8** seconds. You may also recall a positive memory, positive future desire or an experience of beauty, appreciation or inspiration.

What are some guided meditation APPs?

- Calm
- Headspace
- Insight Timer
- Mindfulness
- Buddhify
- Take a Break
- Simply Being
- Yoga Nidra
- Breathe2 Relax
- 10% Happier

Additional resources:

Mindfulness Center at Brown

<https://www.brown.edu/public-health/mindfulness/home>

Bwell Health Promotion

<https://www.brown.edu/bwell>